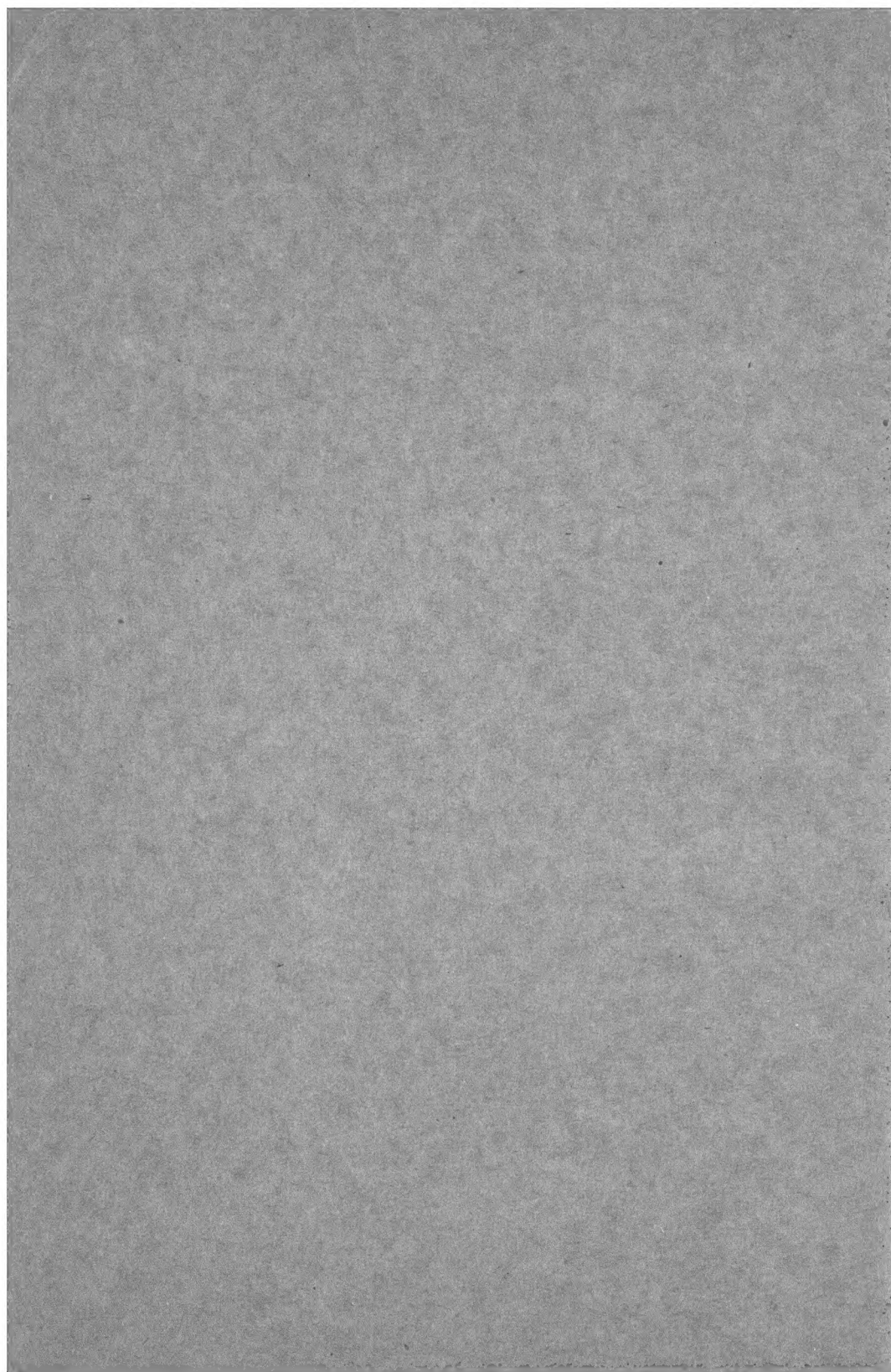


"Medicine Hat"

*Sidelights on Early Days
in Medicine Hat
and Vicinity*



Senator F. W. Gershaw



Medicine Hat



Medicine Hat is situated on the South Saskatchewan River in township 12, range 5, west of the 4th meridian. Like many another Western city, it has grown to its present size by fits and starts. It was the centre of a large ranching area and a railway town for many years. Natural gas was discovered and industries were gradually located within its boundaries.

Noted for its hospitality as a city and because of the rather odd name, many travellers have been welcomed and much has been written about it. There are still some stories untold and the author has attempted to save them from being engulfed as it were in the dark remorseless tide of the river of oblivion.

Records are not always interesting, but I hope the following will not be altogether applicable:

If there should be another flood,
Then to this book I'd fly.
If all the earth should be submerged
This book would still be dry."

Prologue

In the National Museum at Ottawa there are huge bones and even whole skeletons of great pre-historic monsters. These relics have been found in the valley of the Red Deer River and in the badlands north of Brooks in Alberta. The awful teeth and the bones are all that remain of these giant lizards, and the size and length of the bones indicate that when living these animals must have been 50 feet in length. The huge creatures wallowed in the water and mud of the rivers and swamps and some of them sank and died in the soft earth, leaving a print of their bodies in this mud, now hardened into rock. There were hundreds of different kinds of these quaint animals. Some had printed plates all along the back from head to tail, others had movable shields over each eye, others still had horns and some had bills like ducks. Truly, nothing so weird and fantastic has lived since. No human eyes ever saw them as they lived so many years before the race of men lived on this earth.

Various names have been given to these early Westerners, e.g., Corynosaurus, Gargosaurus and Gigantosaurus, and they must have been fierce and strong as they browsed and played and fought in the days when the earth was young. They lived their lives and as a class became extinct. Their bones were covered by the landslides; covered too are the tree ferns and towering palms on which they browsed. This vegetation is covered and crushed into coal that we now dig up and burn.

Centuries passed and the surface of the earth rose and sank, time and time again, until the icy waters receded far to the north. Then there were mountains and grassy plains empty and waiting—empty except for small shrubs and trees and perhaps birds and animals. The area stood waiting for mankind to come.

Man did come and the records show that he came from the far north-west, where the coast of Asia lies only 60 miles from America.

The best available records indicate that the earliest human wanderers came to these prairie regions from the heart of Asia. They could cross the narrow Behring Strait by canoes in summer or on the ice in winter. They probably came in families or in hundreds, fishing and hunting as they migrated, staying for

years or for centuries in suitable places and moving on in the endless search for better conditions as their numbers increased. These American Indians belong to the great human stock that spread from northern Asia to northern Europe and China, as well as to this great lone land.

These people had copper-colored skin, long black hair and they dressed in the skins of animals and lived on wild berries and the flesh of animals. They did not till the soil but roamed from place to place and, although they did not realize it, they discovered the new world. Some went along the north coast and are called Eskimos; some followed the west coast to Mexico, but many spread over the plains.

These Indians of the plains found great herds of buffalo on the prairies. Some writers record that in the springtime, when these shaggy animals were moving to new pasture areas, the land would be covered with them as far as the eye could see. The sharp hooves would cut deeply into the sod and the trails thus made are to be seen along the hillsides and over the prairie to the present day. The buffaloes sustained the Blackfeet and Cree Indians. They lived on their flesh and dressed in their hides. They ruthlessly killed thousands, taking only the tender parts for food and leaving the remainder for the wolves. The Indians lived in wretched tents called wigwams, had the excitement of hunting and fighting other tribes, and most of the work was done by the squaws. When not engaged in collecting human scalps or buffalo meat, they spent the time in idleness.

Shortly after the landing of Columbus in 1492, the Atlantic coast areas were explored. Many Frenchmen left the new settlements for western regions, not to make homes but with the hope of finding a waterway to the Pacific. The Rockies were found but it would seem that Anthony Hendry in 1754 was the first white man to explore the great plain between the North and the South Saskatchewan rivers. He found the Blackfoot Indian tribes living on the buffalo like their forefathers and, like them, spending their time feasting, dancing to the music of the tom-tom, and unwilling even to hunt until they were short of supplies.

For the next three-quarters of a century the area around Medicine Hat was the scene of much turbulent life. The Indian tribes fought each other. The smugglers, the whiskey runners and other wild and lawless men had a free hand and many are

the tales told of wild orgies, brutal and shameful deeds bringing acute suffering and distress to innocent people. There was no semblance of government or order and the guilty went unpunished. The missionaries could do little in the face of this debauchery and crime.

Before 1872 there was no government west of Manitoba and no security for life or property. A halfbreed named Goudin brutally murdered his wife close to a Hudson's Bay fort. He was not arrested because there was no power to act. In 1871, it is stated on good authority eighty-eight Blackfeet Indians were murdered at the junction of the Bow and Belly rivers in a drunken brawl induced by whiskey introduced among them by the traders and smugglers.

In addition to the crime and debauchery caused by the ardent spirits so early obtainable, horse stealing seemed to be a favorite pastime for the Indians and a chief cause of the tribal wars.

Reports of Indian massacres, or robbery and of murder were sent from this vicinity to Ottawa. Whiskey runners secured valuable furs in exchange for their deadly whiskey. Crazed by this vile liquor, the Indians fought among themselves, and the lawless traders were guilty of many crimes. A band of Indians was camped in the Cypress Hills one evening in the summer of 1873. The squaws were putting the children up for the night, the men were lying around smoking and talking and the young braves and maidens were dancing. A band of American traders, obsessed by some evil spirit, crept quietly up a ravine and from a hiding place behind a cutbank began to shoot the defenceless Indians. About thirty of the poor Indians were killed and only a few escaped by fleeing into the hills. When this gruesome story reached Ottawa, recruiting of the Mounted Police force was started in the East. The government was determined to end the lawlessness. Three hundred young men with special qualifications came forward to embark on the great adventure. These men were to face cold and hunger. They were to be exposed to the heat of summer and the blizzards of winter. They met and arrested outlaws who had little regard for human life, and they guided and controlled great bands of wild Indians. They endured much but they made a name for the force that will forever stand out in the annals of history.

The Cypress Hills

*In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not
winced or cried aloud.
Under the bludgeoning of chance my head is
bloody but unbowed.*

—HENLEY.

It is thought that the first white men to see the Cypress Hills were the Hudson Bay traders in 1825. They had a trading post at Chesterfield House where the Red Deer River joins the South Saskatchewan. Being French, they called the hills "Montaigne de Cypre," or Mountain of Jack Pine. The English later turned Cypre to Cypress, although there are no cypress trees there.

In the spring of 1859 Captain Palliser, after spending the winter in Edmonton, travelled southeast, passed the present site of Medicine Hat and went on to the hills. Here he found wood, water and grass which was a great blessing as he and his men had suffered so much on the dry prairies. The hills rise 1,000 feet above the surrounding area. They are higher than the town of Banff. The height of land is about 50 miles from east to west and 30 from north to south and it really has been the birthplace of the western ranching industry.

In the summer of 1875, Fort Walsh was established in the heart of the Cypress Hills. It was really the centre for the North West Mounted Police until the main line of the C.P.R. was built through in 1883.

The Cypress Hills gave protection and material necessities to the Indians. Here the gods had provided for these children of the wild in many ways. The grass was good, there were sheltered areas for camping, there was fresh water and game. The region was the sanctuary, the stronghold, the hunting ground and the temple for these wandering people. Rising high above all the surrounding land, the hills were majestic. From their peaks could be seen the brilliance of the sunsets and the splendor of the northern lights. The deep broad coulee at the western end of the hills was called Medicine Lodge.

There the tribes gathered in great numbers each summer to worship the Great Spirit in the pagan ritual of the Sun Dance. At such times in the evenings for many miles could be heard the rhythmical beat of the tom-tom and the tribal chant.

The Sun Dance of the present day is colorful and attracts the entire population of the different tribes. It is; however, celebrated without the horrible cruelty and danger of death that marked the ancient ceremonies. The Sun Dance of the early days was forbidden as soon as the Mounted Police had gained sufficient ascendancy over the tribes. The last cruel observance was about 1890 and was witnessed by Robert McCutcheon, who lived in Medicine Hat until recently. The torture had to be endured before a young brave could graduate from boyhood to the status of a tribal warrior. The torture was of a shockingly cruel nature, and had to be endured without the slightest evidence of pain.

The entire tribe gathered to witness the trials. A large ring was formed. The Medicine Man or the head squaw took a sharp knife and cut two parallel slits in the breast of the youth. The skin and muscles between these slits were lifted and a rope or piece of tough thong was passed from one to the other beneath the flesh. The ends were tied to form a loop. Then the loop was firmly fastened to the top of an upright pole or the strong branch of a tree. The youth must then tear himself loose by throwing himself violently until the thongs or rope tore through the tender flesh of his chest. Should he fail, or show any indication of suffering, he is disgraced and is forever a marked man in the tribe.

Another method was to cut the flesh in a similar way on the upper part of the back, tie the leather thongs through the raised flesh and attach two buffalo heads to the loop. The heavy buffalo heads would hang free of the ground and the candidate must dance and jump around until the heads tore free. Still another method was to drag the suffering wretch behind horses until the tortured flesh gave way. No one was admitted to the standing of a brave until he had passed one of these tests, bearing himself with a stoical dignity that would prove his control and ability to endure. Youths of 17 or 18 often passed with high honors, but woe to the youth who failed.

The Indian mothers were anxious for their sons to pass and they always watched the ceremony. One young lad danced with great vigor and endured with fortitude, but his strength

was not sufficient to last till the heavy buffalo heads had torn the flesh to release the thong. Finally, tottering, swaying, with his face grimly set, he shook off one dangling skull, but could not free himself of the other. He stooped, struggled up again, but finally pitched forward on his knees. Glances and words of scorn were directed to him. With a great effort he rose to his feet, but was pitching forward again just as his mother on horseback, dashed into the ring, seized the buffalo head, urged her pony forward till the thong tore through without a murmur from her son, who was then hailed as a warrior of the tribe.

Before the coming of the police, missionaries and traders had found their way into Southern Alberta. There also was an overflow of bad men from Montana who secured valuables from the Indians in exchange for a very poor brand of whiskey. The whiskey-maddened tribes fought each other, and at times robbed and scalped the white traders.

Never was a more terrible revenge carried out than that devised by a trader named Evans. He and his partner were attacked in the Cypress Hills. The partner was killed and the horses stolen. Evans swore vengeance and went south to St. Louis. He purchased bales of blankets that were infected with a most virulent form of smallpox which was raging there. Carefully wrapping these bales, he shipped them up to the Indian country and left them along the river banks for the passers-by to take. Of course the red men seized upon this treasure trove, and smallpox raged through the tribes causing the death of thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of the Crees, Blackfeet, Stony and Sarcee Indians.



Jerry Potts

*We'd find each face was beautiful
However dull it seems
If looking past the grim outside
We'd see the wistful dreams.*

In 1874 the North West Mounted Police had reached Southern Alberta in their westward march. In those days many of the whiskey traders and gamblers led wild, dissipated lives. The Indians were debauched, and their furs, ponies or anything they had was taken in exchange for a small quantity of fire water. Fort Benton in U.S.A. was the centre of vice and gambling and Fort Whoop-up on the Canadian side, was the hangout of lawless men. There was no law enforcement and some of these men stopped at no crime and were guided by no moral principles. The police were determined to stamp out this disgrace and make a law-abiding race out of the Indians.

In carrying out these objectives, Jerry Potts gave valuable help and advice. Commissioner French engaged him as a scout in 1874, and he served the Force faithfully and well until his death in Macleod in 1906. He had a Piegan Indian mother and a Scotch father. His father was killed in Missouri by a drink-crazed Blackfoot Indian.

Before his death he named his assailant. Jerry, then a boy of 17, swore to his mother that he would not rest until he had avenged his father's death. He followed the killer for months across the prairie, over the mountains and through dense forest, always to learn that his quarry was just ahead, seeking safety among Indian tribes. Jerry kept doggedly on until he came to the main camp of the Sarcees where Calgary now is located. He had caught up to his man. He accused him of murdering his father and challenged him to fight a battle to the death. Tomahawks and knives were the weapons and the terrible battle was fought before the whole tribe of Sarcee warriors. From the beginning it was tooth and nail. Each watched for the first opportunity to plunge his knife into the other's body or to scalp his opponent. Many times weapons were raised for the fatal plunge only to be countered by the adversary.

Both were wounded many times, but it was Jerry who struck the fatal blow. We of the present day can hardly picture such an event. No Marquis of Queensbury rules, no referee, no gong to end the rounds, only strength, courage, skill, cruelty and endurance, with life as the prize.

The active years of the hero's life were devoted to police work. He was a tower of strength to the men in scarlet who were unversed in the ways of the country. He had an uncanny sense of location and seemed to know his way in the great lone land in sunshine and in storm. He could speak the language of many tribes and was a matchless diplomat in dealing with these children of the plains. He gained the confidence of the police the very first day he was guiding them. They had suffered much from lack of water and fresh meat. They were being guided through an unknown and dangerous country. Jerry pushed on ahead and at noon, when they caught up with him, he was sitting beside a fat buffalo that he had killed and dressed. That night he guided them to a spring of the best water they had had for weeks.

On one occasion news came that some Indian women and children had been murdered. Col. Macleod, with two officers and Jerry, started out to bring in the guilty. The weather was cold and sun dogs could be seen in the sky. They hurried on and soon they were tasting the driven snow. Finally, they came to a cutbank. They dug a hole in it with their knives and remained there all night and all day. They were nearly frozen. They took turns at holding the two horses. They could not sleep or cook food. After a second night they decided to press on, rather than perish in the cave. Constable Ryan could not walk. The others took turns at helping him. During the day they reached the river Jerry was aiming for, and that night they reached an American camp.

On another occasion he guided Col. Macleod and a detachment of police to Fort Whoop-up. They gathered their forces when they approached the fort and galloped down the hill with the sun shining on their bright armor. Dead bodies of Indians could be seen all around. They thundered at the gates, but got no answer. Finally, an ancient half-breed peeked out through an opening, and seeing the great array, ran for his life. The fort was deserted; the whiskey traders had escaped.

On one occasion a band of Indians came to interview the colonel at Fort Macleod. Their speaker talked and talked. He got quite excited and made many motions with his hands. The O.C. listened patiently for a while, then, weary and curious to know what it was all about, he called out, "What does he say?" Jerry replied, "He say he damn glad."

For over 20 years this man of small stature, bowed legs, wrinkled skin and constant cough was on police duty. He made a great contribution. He led the officers to many criminals and was often exposed to great danger. His knowledge saved police from being trampled by the feet of stampeding buffalo herds and from dangerous encounters with the Indians. He played a big part in establishing law and order and earned for himself a worthy place in police history. His mortal remains lie in a Union cemetery in Macleod beneath a headstone marked "Interpreter."



Sitting Bull

About 1865, prospectors settled in the Yellowstone district of the United States. They quarreled with the Sioux Indians and the American troops were called out. Chief Sitting Bull declared war on the U.S. government. General Custer and 1,200 men came to the Sioux camp. A battle followed in the valley of the Little Big Horn River, and the Americans were slain almost to a man. After the battle, Gen. Custer was lying dead. A short distance away the body of his brother was found. Practically none of the soldiers escaped. In the morning, Indians could have been seen skulking around gathering scalps and anything valuable they could find. Although the Indians had won, they knew they were in danger, and Sitting Bull, supported by his two sub-chiefs, Sweet Bird and Spotted Eagle, came to Canada with his band and settled around Fort Walsh. Colonel Irvine and Inspector Walsh were in charge of law enforcement at that time. Knowing all about the Custer massacre, they knew the Sioux would need careful watching in the Cypress Hills where they were now located. Sitting Bull would not leave Canada for a long time, and the presence of these savage Indians was a great burden for the young country.

At first there were great herds of buffalo, but as this source of food vanished, the police realized that the Indians could not be left to starve.

General Terry came at the request of the U.S.A. and tried to induce them to return to the American reservations. Sitting Bull did not wish to be interviewed by Gen. Terry, as he did not trust any American. "How can we talk to white men who have blood on their hands?" he asked. The conference arranged in the fort by Col. Irvine and Inspector Walsh was a complete failure. Sitting Bull loudly condemned the American authorities. He said he had no faith in "long knives" who had "stained the grass with blood."

The people of the United States were greatly interested in the meeting and waited anxiously for word of the outcome. A news reporter, J. J. Healy, rode 340 miles to the telegraph office at Helena, Montana, in 43 hours to give his paper, the New York Herald, a scoop of the news.

Police Records

PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE

By SARAH K. BOLTON

*Nothing great is lightly won,
Nothing won is lost;
Every good deed, nobly done,
Will repay the cost.
Leave to Heaven in humble trust,
All you will to do;
But, if you succeed, you must
Paddle your own canoe.*

Many stories can be found in the records about the North West Mounted Police officers in their dealing with warring Indian tribes, in their getting the man no matter how desperate he was when accused of crime, but they also performed a more kindly mission. They often fed destitute settlers and came to their rescue in times of danger.

Before the coming of the C.P.R., Constable Conradi, while on patrol duty, saw the smoke of a fire some miles east of Medicine Hat. He asked a settler if any homesteader lived in that direction. "Yes," was the answer, "but it is impossible to go to them." "I will go," said the officer. The horse was so badly burned that he had to be shot. The policeman was also painfully burned, but he reached Mr. Young who was exhausted, helped him to fight the fire, but soon realized that the little home could not be saved. He found Mrs. Young and the children standing waist deep in a slough. He knew they would be suffocated when the fire came, so he waded in and carried the children to burned ground with Mrs. Young following. "We owe our lives to him," she said. This was the deed of a hero. There was no glamor of war, no cheering of comrades, no music. He was alone.

GRABURN

In 1879 the first casualty since the formation of the Mounted Police Force occurred. Corporal Graburn was in charge of a number of police horses with foot disease. Starchild, an Indian with a bad record, persisted in coming into his small

camp and sitting stolidly and silently there. His odor was particularly offensive and the police officer threw Starchild out, telling him what he thought of him. This aroused resentment as it was an unaccustomed act. Later, Graburn was patrolling the south country and when he failed to return a search party was sent out. Although there was no visible trail on account of the snow, Jerry Potts, a police guide, led the party to a ravine and then by accident showed that he was on the right track. Potts' horse shied and kicked away some snow with his hoof. This disclosed to Jerry's sharp eyes a patch of blood. A little farther on, the dead man's hat was seen on a low shrub and his body was found lower in the ravine. He had been shot in the back of the head. His horse had also been shot. Potts removed the snow over a large area and reconstructed the crime. While returning to the post, Graburn had been joined by two Indians. This could be deduced because there were tracks made by unshod horses. Suspicion fell at once on Starchild, but he had already left the country.

Two years later, news came that Starchild was back on the Blood reserve. Sergeant Patterson and the able scout, Jerry Potts, were sent out to bring him in. As they approached the tent, the flap was drawn aside and Starchild stood there with a levelled rifle. One of the oldest ruses in existence worked. Patterson looked behind Starchild and shouted, "Collar him from behind." As the Indian turned they grabbed him. Starchild was acquitted of murder by a jury of newly-arrived settlers. They were afraid of what the Indians might do if there was a hanging. Starchild later died of tuberculosis. The name "Graburn" was given to the creek and the district through which it runs. A cairn was erected to mark the spot where the officer in scarlet had fallen. The memory of this sad event is revived annually as the surrounding area is the picnic ground for the settlers of the area south of Walsh, at Graburn Gap.

On another occasion the police were in a hostile camp of Indians. Chief Two Claws was very angry and was out to kill. The situation was really serious when Dub Dillon attracted their attention. He went up to the sullen chief's horse and pulled a long feather, a corkscrew and a long knife out of the horse's mouth. He then took three coins, threw them away on the prairie and at once recovered them from the tea kettle. The chief was amazed and his mood changed. He had often heard of the devil, he said, but had not seen him before.

A. L. Haydon tells of the following incident:

A Hindu fanatic squatted in front of a train in India. Resisting all efforts to remove him, he was run over and killed. A somewhat similar event happened in the building of the C.P.R. just east of Medicine Hat. Pie-a-Pot, a Cree chief, and his armed followers set up a teepee, unloaded their carts and allowed their horses to graze right in front of where the line was being constructed. C.P.R. officers ordered them to move off, but they refused to move and showed signs of offering stubborn resistance. Their action was reported to the police at Regina. A message was sent to the officers at Maple Creek: "Please settle the trouble—move the Indians off." A sergeant and a constable were sent to the scene. The Indians surrounded them, jeering at the men in scarlet, backing their ponies into the police horses and racing around, firing off their guns into the air. The order was read and the officers said they would give the chief ten minutes to move. Pie-a-Pot continued to smoke his pipe, surrounded by the squaws and children. "Time's up," shouted the sergeant. Then he dismounted, threw the reins over and kicked down the tent poles. "Now get," he said. Having a wholesome regard for the police, they had the sense to go. At this point the town now called Piapot was built.



The Prairies

*These are the gardens of the desert. These
the unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
for which the speech of England has no name.*

—THE PRAIRIES.

In the years 1857-60, Captain John Palliser, under the auspices of the Colonial Office, made extensive explorations of the area between Lake Superior and the Rocky Mountains. He described one fertile belt embracing the valleys of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and the park-like area of the North Saskatchewan. He also described a semi-arid region in the treeless area of the South Saskatchewan. He outlined the Palliser Triangle, extending from Cardston to Deloraine with the apex at Alsask. He considered this area unsuited to settlement.

The province of Canada also sent out Professor Hind and S. J. Dawson in 1857-58, and their report was similar to that of Captain Palliser.

However, after the Dominion of Canada was formed in 1867, more interest was taken in the great possibilities of the West and in 1870 the vast area known as Rupert Land came into the possession of the Dominion. The next ten years saw much settlement in this great area. Adventurers came, being attracted by the homestead and preemption privileges. Large areas were settled by the Mennonites, who by an Order-in-Council of March, 1873, were promised exemption from military service and oaths, a free grant of land, their own religious schools and low rates from Hamburg to Winnipeg. In 1876 a great number of Icelanders came and settled in Manitoba

The history of modern colonization does not show a single case where a newly-settled colony has prospered or made social progress without commerce with other communities. This was realized and efforts were made to get railways through the West. After much negotiating, in December, 1880, an agreement was made with the C.P.R. by the government of Sir John A. MacDonald.

The company was to build 2,000 miles of railway and in return received the existing lines, twenty-five million dollars, twenty-five million acres of land and certain tax exemptions. The company could choose land that was "fairly fit for settlement."

With a view to testing out the land ten experimental farms were established on the line west of Swift Current. These farms were abandoned on account of the climate. Also a German colony was established at Dunmore. These sturdy farmers soon had to admit defeat. In 1889 Sir John Lester-Kaye started an experiment in what might be called colonization de luxe. Each settler was to have \$800.00. Sir John would then loan him \$1,200. The money was to be used to build a house, dig a well, provide livestock and farm machinery. The townships chosen for this experiment extended from Crane Lake to Langdon. The uncertain weather caused the failure of this scheme. It was the last attempt in that area to develop large-scale farming.

An unfortunate phase in the history of the agricultural development of Western Canada was the settlement of many areas of submarginal land. Such settlement took place under the stimulus of unusually good crop seasons, when poor lands produced fairly good yields. Lacking or disregarding information on long-term climatic conditions, many settlers made investments in land and buildings, and secured social services, out of proportion to the intrinsic agricultural value of their lands. The inevitable results were the early abandonment of land and the creation of uncollectable debts.

An example of injudicious settlement on a large scale occurred in southeastern Alberta. Much of the settlement in this region occurred during the "good" period which culminated in the "bumper" crop of 1915. Normal, dry conditions in the years following 1917, however, forced most of the settlers to abandon their holdings. Census returns for 1926 showed that, in Census District No. 3 of Alberta, which extends north and west from Medicine Hat, 55 per cent of the farm acreage was abandoned.

One consequence of the settlement and subsequent abandonment of the submarginal areas has been the destruction of the original prairie grass. Natural regrassing of abandoned cultivated prairie land takes place only over a long period of

years. In the interval, such land has little or no value as pasturage and, infested with weeds and exposed to wind erosion, may constitute a menace to nearby arable areas.

A further evil which accompanies injudicious settlement is found on submarginal farms which have not been abandoned. Such farms have been aptly described as the "slums of the open prairie," where economical crop production is impossible, and where social services, if available, can only be maintained at a loss to the community. A large percentage of the cost of rural relief and of the losses arising from tax delinquencies which have been experienced on the prairies in recent years, can be charged to the existence of submarginal farming.



The Pioneers

*For when the one Great Scorer comes
To write against your name
He writes not what you won or lost
But how you played the game.*

It may be said that Medicine Hat was born in 1883. It was realized that the main line of the C.P.R. was coming through during that year and these hardy adventurers started the town to be ready for the coming of this great line of communication. Much could be written of these men of vision and we who came after them owe much to them for their courage and enterprise. They endured the hardships and laid the foundations so that those who came later could enjoy the comforts which have always been a feature of life here.

The first business men carried on in tents because the townsite was not yet surveyed. Messrs. Tweed and Ewart had the first store. They were followed by William Cousins, James Hargrave and Henry Stewart. Mr. William Finlay established the first lumber yard in 1884. Mr. Michael Leonard ran the first bakery and Fred Pope ran the first water cart, delivering water for 25 cents a barrel. The American Hotel was erected that year and the early druggists were Mr. Albert Hughes and Mr. Walton. Thos. Hutchinson had the first harness and saddle store and H. Finn had the first butcher store. John Hay established the first blacksmith shop and Wm. Tom was a contractor and builder in 1883. Robert, Jim and R. C. Porter were active in those days and Mr. H. Yuill, coming in 1885, was outstanding during all the years as an employer of labour and as the builder and founder of many industries.

The first bank was "The Merchants" and Mr. Ed. Fewings was the manager. Shortly after it started, Bill Culley entered, dressed in cowboy attire, including high top boots and a gun. He marched up to the wicket and said, "I want some money." The cashier, perhaps having been reading Wild West stories, thought a holdup was being staged. Help was hurriedly summoned and when the local policeman mounted the steps with a gun in hand and peered cautiously in, the would-be customer was peacefully chewing a cud of tobacco.

The "News" was started in 1886. The early editors were Armour, Halt, J. K. Drinnan, Rev. Gordon and Fred Forster.

M. Grimmitt was the first school teacher. There were twenty pupils and the residents voluntarily gave \$2.00 per month toward the expenses. The bachelors later wanted a lady teacher. Applications were called for and a practical joker attached a picture of some actress, taken from a magazine, to each application. The selecting committee had quite a time selecting a teacher and when the chosen lady did arrive, there were some disappointed swains because she did not resemble the picture that had been viewed with the applications. However, from that day to this, the schools have maintained a high standard of efficiency.

One of the first women to engage in the laundry business was a Negress who came across from Montana. She was commonly called Negro Molly and claimed to be the "first white woman" to live in this country.

It is said if you do not like the weather in Medicine Hat you have only to wait a little while and it will change. The records show that storms may come early or late in the winter season and that they come with such sudden fury that great destruction results. No sadder tragedy can be related than that which cost the lives of two heroic boys in November, 1892. These boys, Harold Walton, age ten, and Moran Cochrane, age fifteen, were riding their ponies along Bullshead Creek when suddenly at about four o'clock in the afternoon a blinding blizzard came upon them. They were forced to drift before the storm—with one result. Benumbed with cold and exhausted, the younger boy seemed to have perished first. His body was found in six inches of snow covered with the saddle and horse blanket. Moran's body was found a half-mile farther on face downward beside his pony with the bridle rein still held in his lifeless hand. He had fought desperately against the fatal stupor. After wrapping Harold in his coat and fixing the saddle and blankets to protect him as best he could, he had himself bravely started out in the pitiless storm to find help. Searching parties headed by the fathers found the bodies at about eight o'clock the next night.

The material in this chapter was gathered by the late Rev. Mr. Morrow, who himself as a pioneer contributed much to the welfare and spiritual life of the city. The story is told

that once in the early pioneer days a man was driving his horse hitched to a heavy load along the muddy street. He was flogging the poor creature without mercy. Mr. Morrow saw what was going on and went out to reason with the cruel driver. The man with oaths resented the interference. The minister struck just one blow and the man hit the ground and rolled down into the ditch.

During the C.P.R. construction days Medicine Hat had a small temporary hospital. In 1887, when the town had several hundred people, a meeting was called and a permanent building arranged for. This building still stands and has been of great service ever since. In 1889 the Act of Incorporation was passed by the Legislature of the North West Territories. It was the first incorporated hospital in what is now Alberta and the only hospital between Winnipeg and Victoria. Patients came, according to the records, from Golden, Edmonton, Calgary, Macleod, Lethbridge, Grenfell, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and many intervening points.

At that time, and for many years after, typhoid was the most common and most dreaded disease. It spread through whole extra gangs causing long periods of severe fever and many sad and untimely deaths. A number of nurses and doctors succumbed to the fever which they contracted while caring for the sick. After the cause and the way the contagion spreads were discovered, precautions were taken and the epidemics which were fatal to so many have been almost stamped out.

The then superintendent of the C.P.R., Mr. J. N. Niblock, deserves great credit for his work in organizing and supporting the hospital for many years. Officers of the company contributed generously to this worthy institution.



Place Names

The most northerly meteorological station was for many years located in Medicine Hat. As the reports of weather conditions that were often bad were sent all over the continent people got into the habit of saying that the weather came from Medicine Hat.

If someone from the city registered in a hotel in the South the other guests would look around for snowshoes and a buffalo coat. The name thus became well known.

No one knows exactly why the name Medicine Hat was chosen. Below are copies of two letters, one from the secretary of the Geographic Board of Canada, and one from the historical department of the R.C.M.P., outlining about all the reasons that have been given:

"The site of the present city is called Medicine Hat in the report of the Northwest Mounted Police for 1882 and about this year the first house was erected. 'Medicine Hat' is a translation of the Blackfeet Indian word 'saamis,' meaning 'head-dress of a medicine man.' One explanation connects the name with a fight between the Cree and Blackfoot tribes when the Cree medicine man lost his bonnet in the river. Another connects it with the slaughter of a party of white settlers and the appropriation by the Indian medicine man of a fancy hat worn by one of the victims. One explanation is that the name was applied originally to a hill east of the town from the resemblance to the hat of a medicine man. This hill is styled Medicine Hat on a map of the Department of Interior in 1883. Another with the rescue of a squaw from the South Saskatchewan River by an Indian brave upon whose head a well known medicine man placed his hat as a token of admiration of the act of the rescuer. Still another story says the name was given to the locality because an Indian chief saw in a vision an Indian rising out of the South Saskatchewan wearing the plumed hat of a medicine man."

—Secretary of Geographic Board of Canada.

(COPY)

MEMORANDUM:

MEDICINE HAT

"Many years ago (1905), while in the Medicine Hat district, I made enquiries bearing on the origin of this unusual place-name. There were many old Indians and white pioneers there and at Fort Macleod, and although from among them I gleaned many versions bearing on the subject, the one that appeared to be the most authentic, and vouched for by most of the Indians whom I interviewed, ran as follows:

The unusual name 'Medicine Hat' was the outcome of an Indian legend. While camped on the South Branch, a Blackfoot warrior had a vision. Ice covered the river, in the midst of which was a small patch of open water caused by the current. A figure appeared from this opening—some versions say an Indian chief, others a huge serpent—wearing an elaborate head-dress adorned with eagle plumes. It so happened that the young warrior at the time was courting the maiden of his heart, and was told that if he threw her to the underwater creature he would henceforth be the greatest war chief in all his tribe. For the love of her barbaric fiancée, the girl acquiesced and was hurled beneath the water. Henceforth the place was known as the 'Spot of the Medicine Hat'."

(Sgd.) J. P. Turner, R.C.M.P.,
Historical Research.

No doubt many people have wondered how various places, rivers, etc., were named. For instance, the Bow River, and the Belly River. Many people have said that the Bow River was named because of a certain kind of wood known for its resiliency was to be found on its banks, and that the wood made excellent bows for the Indians. Recently, however, a story has been related which seems plausible.

In the early days when the French explorers were persistently pushing west, they, of course, followed the water courses, travelling always by canoe. It is said that a party of French explorers was following the South Saskatchewan up stream when in what is now Southeastern Alberta they came to a fork in the river, the confluence of two rivers. To their right was a beautiful, turbulent stream, to their left was one also equally beautiful and turbulent. They decided to call the first the BEAU and the second the BELLE. The masculine

gender for the French word meaning beautiful or big is beau and the feminine gender is belle. So thereafter the rivers were known as the Beau and the Belle. Men who followed the French explorers were not well informed on the correct French spelling of the words and in due course the rivers became the Bow and the Belly.

Bassano—Named after Marquis de Bassano, a Canadian Pacific shareholder.

Calgary—Name suggested by Col. Macleod in 1876, after his home town in the island of Mull, Scotland.

Bowell—Named after Sir Mackenzie Bowell, prime minister of Canada from 1894 to 1896.

Alderson (formerly Carlstadt)—The named was changed during World War I; Alderson was a Canadian commander.

Tilley—After Mr. Tilley, a director of the C.P.R.

Dunmore—Named after Lord Dunmore who was one of the early explorers. As he was passing through Moose Jaw on one occasion he killed a moose. When returning he used the jawbone to repair his Red River cart and thus the city of Moose Jaw got its name.

Redcliff—From the red color of the cliffs in the vicinity.

Bellcot—Mr. Cotterill was the C.P.R. superintendent and named the siding after Mrs. Bella Cotterill, his wife.

Seven Persons—Translation from the Blackfoot word Kitsuiki a-taps. Applied to the creek along whose banks seven persons perished. The details are not known.

Whitla—After R. J. Whitla, a Winnipeg merchant who visited the place when the narrow gauge railway ran through to Lethbridge.

Winnifred—On the map 888, after a relative of an English shareholder of the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company.

Bow Island—There is an island in the Bow River north of the town.

Empress—(1913) after Queen Victoria, Empress of India.

Suffield—After Charles Habard, 5th Baron of Suffield, who helped to finance the C.P.R.

Brooks—(1903) after N. E. Brooks, divisional engineer at Calgary. He died at Sherbrooke, Quebec, in 1926.

Gleichen—After Count Gleichen, who travelled on the C.P.R. in 1883.

Irvine—(1883-85) after Col. A. Irvine, Commissioner of the R.N.W.M.P. 1880-86, later warden of Stony Mountain penitentiary in Manitoba.

Walsh—After Superintendent J. M. Walsh, Inspector of the R.N.W.M.P., 1873-83.

Larmour—(1909) after R. E. Larmour, general freight agent, C.P.R.

Bindloss—(1914) after Harry Bindloss, writer of Western novels.

Etzikom—(1916) from Blackfoot word meaning coulee or valley.

Manyberries—(1911) translated from the Blackfoot word "akonis kway."



“Crowfoot”

*To the Indians the most famous of all
the mottoes and expressions attributed to
Chief Crowfoot was:*

*“MOKAKIT KI EYEKAKIMAT”
which translated is “Be wise and persevere.”*

The pages of history show that among all people in every age there are some men and women with great native ability and endowed with great qualities who stand out above the crowd. In every crisis in human relations leaders come forward to lead the race onward in the upward paths. Among the Indian tribes we have Tecumseh, Pauline Johnson and Dr. Ronateka. But perhaps none is more worthy of a place in the hall of fame than the Blackfoot Indian chief “Crowfoot.” To preserve memories of the heroic deeds and “little remembered acts” of this noble chief, I have assembled herein some of the records.

Little has been written about his birth, or early life, but in the seventies and eighties, white men and red men claimed him to be the chief of chiefs. He had a tall, gaunt figure, a clear-cut profile and his long, straight, black hair often hung about his face. He led the braves of his tribe in many battles against their enemies of the plains and they always paid him the truest loyalty and homage.

He was described as being the personification of grace. He made eloquent gestures in his speech. He condemned the use of fire-water and even when he was weak and dying he refused egg-nogs because of the brandy in them. In his public addresses to his people he used illustrations that are among the most expressive in all literature.

“They come to protect us,” he said of the R.C.M.P., “as the feathers protect the birds from the frost of winter.”

After a trip to the Eastern cities, he told his young men: “It is useless to rise against the whites. They are thick as the flies in summertime.”

When they were keen to go on the war-path, he said:
"To rise there must be an object."
"To rebel there must be a wrong done."
"To do either we must know how it will benefit us."

At Battle River on one occasion, the missionary, Father Lacombe, was visiting a Blackfoot tribe. After the evening service they were all roused by a yelling close at hand. The Crees had stolen up in the darkness and with gunfire and war-whoops had burst into the camp. If the Crees had known the missionary was there they would not have attacked the enemy. All night the battle raged and Father Lacombe went around caring for the sick and the dying. When day dawned he held his cross on high and called for peace, but his voice could not be heard. A bullet struck his forehead and blood ran down his face. Crowfoot saw it and in grief and rage he rushed forth and called with all the mighty force of his voice: "You dogs, you have shot 'Goodheart.' You have killed your friend, the man of prayer." They heard at last and fell back in shame through the woods. "We never knew he was there; we will fight no longer," they said.

On another occasion, the Rev. John McDougall was telling the Indians about British justice. When he had finished, Crowfoot took his hand and, placing it on his own heart, said: "My brother, your words make me feel glad. I listened to them not only with my ears but with my heart also. When you tell me about this strong force which will govern with good laws and will treat the Indians and white men alike, you make us rejoice. My brother, I believe you and am thankful. There will be joy throughout the land."

Chief Crowfoot had faith in the Mounted Police officers, and they in turn were very successful in their control of the Indian tribes.

The white forces in the United States were not so fortunate. About this time the shocking Custer massacre took place just across the border in the Yellowstone district. The Sioux Indians, after this inhuman slaughter, came to the Cypress Hills in Alberta and settled there under the leadership of Chief Sitting Bull and his sub-chiefs, Sweet Bird and Spotted Eagle.

Before this terrible event the Sioux chiefs had sent tobacco to the Blackfoot Indians. This was to be smoked if they were willing to cross the line and help Sitting Bull fight the Crees

and also the American people. They promised to give the Blackfeet plenty of horses and mules and also a number of white women whom they had taken prisoners. Some of the chiefs were in favor of going but Crowfoot's advice prevailed and, on being promised police protection, they sent the tobacco back. Later Crowfoot visited Sitting Bull at Walsh but would not join his forces.

Crowfoot said to Captain Denny: "We all see that the day is coming when the buffalo will all be killed and we will have nothing to live on. You will then come into our camp and see our people starving. I know the heart of the white soldier will then be sorry for us and will tell our Great Mother who will not let her children starve. The Blackfeet are getting shut in. The Crees are coming from the north and the whites from the east and south. They are destroying our way of living, yet we will not join the Sioux against the whites but will depend on you to help us."

The Lieutenant-Governor visited the Blackfeet at Gleichen. The result of the interview was sent to Sir John A. Macdonald, who replied that the loyalty of the Blackfeet would never be forgotten. Crowfoot's words were sent to the Queen. If this wise counsel of Crowfoot had not prevailed, Medicine Hat and Calgary would likely have been destroyed as they then were. This chief also refused to join in the Riel Rebellion of 1885.

In 1870 when the Canadian government took over the Great Lone Land, the Indian chiefs had to consider the wisdom of signing the treaty. Chief Crowfoot, mindful of the dignity of his people, insisted that they meet at Blackfoot Crossing on the Bow River. Thousands from the Blackfoot, Bloods, Pigeons, Sarcees and Stoneys gathered. Each tribe was allotted a special place on the meadow and there they erected their gaudily-painted tepees. Children played and shouted. Dogs barked and howled. There was singing and dancing. The tom-toms sounded and the traders opened canvas-covered stores.

There were eighty police officers and men of the R.C.M.P. force present. The whole made a colorful scene when the native chiefs, headed by Crowfoot, welcomed the Queen's representatives. Crowfoot was at the height of his great career. He was wise, cool, tactful and a great ruler of an unruly people. Mentally and physically, he was like Saul—head and shoulders above his people. His was a commanding presence. Food was handed out but he refused to partake until he had heard the terms of the agreement.

Treaty No. 7 was outlined:

"All lands were to go to the government except the Reservations;

"A perpetual payment of \$5 per head was to go to each man, woman and child;

"The reserves were to be large enough to provide one square mile for each family of five persons;

"Provision was made for the supplying of implements, oxen, cattle, seed, grain and the building of schools;

"The sale of fire-water on the reserves was forbidden."

Long and tedious delays followed as the chiefs could not agree among themselves. At last Crowfoot, with his great dignity, expressed his intention of accepting the terms and the other fifty-two chiefs agreed. The concluding ceremony was colorful and imposing. There was much bowing and handshaking and the young braves put on the strange, weird and gruesome Sun Dance.

"I hope you will look on us as your children and be indulgent and charitable to us. I will be the last to sign and I will be the last to break my bond," said Crowfoot.

A salute of 13 guns announced the conclusion of the great Treaty on September 22, 1877.

In 1883, when the C.P.R. rail lines reached the Blackfoot reserve, some of the construction was torn up during the night. Feeling ran high as the Indians felt that Treaty No. 7 was not being kept. Father Lacombe visited Crowfoot and another calamity was averted. Van Horne gave each of these two great men a pass over the C.P.R. and Crowfoot thanked the great railway chief for the "key."

On his death-bed he thanked the government and the doctor. He asked the people to be quiet, and a great hush fell over the camp. Even in death his word was law.

His grave is on the crest of an imposing bluff which was a favorite lookout point in his lifetime. He had asked to be buried there where the hill overlooks the wide river valley. This grave is enclosed in a rude fence where the wild rose and the thistle grow and around it are strewn bleached bones. He who was truly the "father of his people" died on April 25, 1890,

at the age of 69. A suitable cairn has been erected by the side of the road to preserve the memory of the words and deeds of this outstanding leader "for as long as the sun shines and the rivers run"—I hope!

In 1908, Edmund Morris, son of Lieutenant-Governor Morris of the Northwest Territories, and a famous artist in his own right, placed a circle of stones around Crowfoot's grave. In the 20's, Duncan Campbell Scott, superintendent-general of Indian Affairs, and Mr. Gooderham, the agent in charge, visited the grave and had a cement and iron fence placed around the stones. The design was worked out and an engraved plaque was set in cement in the centre. On it were two lines from Scott's poem—"Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris." These lines refer to the ring of stones and to Crowfoot, and read:

"Where he pitched off for the last time in sight of Black-foot Crossing."

Thus three outstanding Canadians are represented—Duncan Campbell Scott, Edmund Morris and Chief Crowfoot.



The Rangemen

*Ask why the eagle soars in air
And builds on high his craggy nest.
Ask why the fishes love the sea,
Then ask me why I love the West.*

Great herds of buffalo once roamed over the plains of Southern Alberta. It was an area suited to their needs. There was a good growth of grass, there were rolling hills and sparkling springs of water. It was also the last and the best ranch country before it was cut up by the fences of the farmers. Bad feeling developed in many districts when the great open range country was made available to the settlers and the records seem to indicate that much of this country should have been left to the cattlemen.

The West owes much to the ranchmen and they were a class with much in common. They were noted for hospitality. No one was ever turned away hungry from their doors. They lived far away from police protection and had to guard their herds from the cattle rustlers and the prowling Indian bands. They operated on a big scale and the word of a rancher was his bond in those primitive days. They were, as a rule, men of ability and good judgment. In fact, they had to have these qualities to prosper and meet the disasters and difficulties they came hopefully through. The market was subject to sudden and violent fluctuations. There were difficulties in the way of getting the cattle shipped when they were ready and there were the fearful losses due to the hard winters and the sudden severe storms.

Tweed & Ewart founded the Medicine Hat Ranch with Ezra Pearson, an old-time stage driver between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, as manager in 1883. It was stocked with cattle from Drayton, Ont. It was the first large ranch located in the district.

In 1883 the snow was deep. It came early and had not all gone by the next June. The stock suffered severely and dead animals were piled up in many coulees. Indians made wages by skinning them for 25 cents each. Of the 12,000 cattle placed on the Cochrane ranch only 4,000 could be found in the spring.

In 1855 these were moved to the Waterton Lake district, but unfortunately the snow there was so deep that what little feed there was could not be reached by even the best rustlers. As the snow got deeper the cattle crowded to the edges of the lakes browsing on the willow stubs and bellowing from hunger. Loss of the entire herd was threatened.

Frank Strong, an experienced cowhand, offered to save the herd for \$1,000. He rounded up 500 cayuses, got a few riders and drove the ponies into the hills. Urged by whip and spur, they floundered ahead for two days, breaking a wide swath in the crusted snow. When they reach the imprisoned herd Strong turned his band homeward. They went with a will, making the return trip in eight hours, and right behind came the starving steers, running toward the open prairie and food. In 12 hours thousands of the cattle were feeding on the cured grass of the reservation.

Mr. J. H. Wallace, who was associated with Walter Ross, had an experience that will long be remembered as it illustrates how fortunes in the ranching business can flit away when they seem to be almost in the grasp of the cattle owner. Mr. Wallace had cattle around the Cypress and Sweet Grass hills. In the fall of 1919 he decided to ship a trainload of prime steers as the market was good. His riders gathered the cattle and the cars were spotted at Manyberries ready for loading. The steers were moving across the country in charge of competent men when almost without warning they found themselves in the midst of a blinding blizzard. The cattle would not face the storm and in spite of the strenuous efforts of the riders they broke and scattered widely, drifting before the storm. It was a hopeless venture ever to get them to the station. Some gathered in the ravines and perished there.

The cold weather came on. There had been little rainfall and there was little feed in the country. As the cold weather continued and the snow got deeper, many weakened animals got down in the drifts and never rose again. Some baled hay was purchased at \$65 a ton and this kept a few of them alive, but they were so gaunt and thin that they also died in the spring. The rancher who had worked so hard, who had seen his herds increase and who had steers in such shape that they would top the market suddenly found that he was financially broken, and broken-hearted as well.

Those who did manage to pull some cattle through that long, hard winter fared little better. In the spring the Fordney

tariff went on, barring our cattle from the U.S.A. market. Prices went lower and lower and practically no one recovered from the losses of that winter.

Most of the winters are mild enough for stock to remain in the open, although feeding is often necessary. Horses usually do better than cattle as they are better able to paw the snow away and reach the range grass. They stay in bands and run to keep warm. They love the range where they were born and will drift 100 miles to get back to it. If lost in a blizzard on horseback, the rider who gives the horse a free rein will usually get through safely.

The cowboys also had much in common. They might go on hilarious busts when in town. They might shoot up a barroom and smash every light in the place, but they were hard workers and loyal to their employers. If a flooded river had to be crossed they did not hesitate to plunge in. If a 50-mile ride was necessary to recover some stock they took it. Many and many a night when the wind was bitterly cold they stayed by their herds. They were good, rough, ready and true. They were skillful and efficient and faced many dangers in the course of their ordinary work.

As the number of ranches increased each had to register a brand. This distinguishing mark was burned into the skin of the animal and also usually was the name of the ranch. An Irishman named Maverick is said to have invented branding. He suggested that cattle should be marked with hot irons, each owner having his particular mark. In this way they could be easily identified in the round-ups. All the ranchers adopted this plan except Mr. Maverick, who was very kind-hearted and did not wish to hurt his cattle. He said if the others all marked their cattle he need not, so he had all the unbranded.

There is no pasturage equal to the wild grass of the open range. One ploughing kills forever the nutritious natural food supplied by the prairies. A plot of ground near Macleod was ploughed in 1879 and has been idle since 1883. Vegetation grew again the next year. The weeds gradually gave way to grass. This grass was good summer feed but with the first touch of frost it withered, died and the nourishment left it entirely. The natural grass remains strong and nutritious even in winter; some of the areas ploughed would have produced more if they had been left as perpetual grazing areas. When broken up the soil powdered and often when the winds came it blew away in clouds. The first crops were good but later crops were very poor.

MANYBERRIES STATION

Previous to 1912 the beef cattle industry on the open range was in a thriving condition. There were vast areas available for the rancher and when one area was over-grazed it was easy to find another fresh area. Then the dry-land farmer came in and the better districts were brought under cultivation, thus breaking up the great open ranges. It was thought that the days of ranching were over and that this industry with all its romance, its profits and tragic losses would be no more.

The dry-land farming, however, was not the hoped-for success owing to adverse soil and weather conditions. When the year 1925 came it was found that some four million acres had been abandoned in Southern Alberta and that this vast area, having been ploughed up, was of little use for grazing.

It was then realized that the range livestock industry must be regarded as a permanent one over large parts of the short grass country. It was thought that steps should be taken to scientifically investigate problems facing the industry and to this end the Dominion Range Experimental Station was established southeast of Manyberries. The mode of procedure was to experiment along the lines of ranching practice so that those who observed and studied the results would be successful and provide better homes and living conditions in small-scale ranching.

The rainfall in 1931 at the station was 6.72 inches and in the wettest year of all—1927—it was 25.28 inches, the average being 11.3 inches. Owing to the high winds and warm temperature the rate of evaporation is high, and as the land is rough and rolling, much of the moisture runs off.

A study of the native vegetation has been made and the poisonous plants identified. As over-grazing results in a serious loss of pounds of beef, experiments were carried out to establish the carrying capacity of grazing lands. The nutritional value of various grasses has been tested and the results of rotation and deferred grazing recorded. The whole problem of water conservation has been worked on including the building of dams, dugouts, reservoirs and the irrigating of pastures and gardens.

The results obtained are published and available to any one who applies to the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa.

A system of bookkeeping is outlined for the small rancher and the examples given show that hard work, good judgment and a full measure of good luck are necessary for obtaining much in the way of profit.

Legends

*The time has come the Walrus said
To talk of many things,
Of shoes and ships and sealing wax
And cabbages and Kings.*

—LEWIS CARROLL.

There were some rather notable families around the district in the early days. One characteristic Englishman was very popular and had a host of friends. He spent many hours almost every day in the barrooms. He never refused a drink yet he had never been seen drunk. He was rather proud of his record and boasted a lot about it. One Christmas Day a group called on him, bringing a goodly supply of wet goods. Gin which looked like water was placed in a water jug and the whiskey bottles were opened. Our friend continued through the afternoon to drink whiskies diluting them with what he thought was water. He stood up to it well, but finally faded and never afterwards boasted to those particular companions of being immune to the effects of alcohol.

●

Records seem to show that there have always been domestic troubles. You have heard of the woman who was occasionally having trouble with her husband. On one occasion the quarrel was worse than usual. "I would have left him then," she confided, "only I had two hens setting and I wanted to see how they would turn out."

In Medicine Hat at one time it did not seem necessary to go to the Parliament for a divorce, because a local lawyer who practised here in the eighties was arranging such matters and giving papers purporting to be final decrees of dissolution of marriage for whatever fee could be raised. It is said that one man obtained such a paper. His wife, not to be outdone, also went and obtained a divorce. Then, before long each of the parties was married again, more happily, let us hope.

●

A bachelor farmer, Robert Ferguson, lived in the Medicine Hat district. He always hoped that next year's crop would be good. One fall day he came in just beaming with happiness. "Well, I've made it," he said. "I'll go east and visit with friends for the next six months."

In just two weeks he was back. His whole appearance was one of dejection and hopelessness. He had visited the home of his birth. He had expected to find relatives, the country store with the tie-posts in front, the dusty roads and the log schoolhouse. The roads were paved and new blocks had been built. There were telephones, radios, departmental stores, street cars and shining autos. He could not find one person he had ever seen and not one who had ever heard of him. When had he left the east? "Oh," he said, "in the spring of '87."

During all the long years the scenes of his childhood had ever been before him. He had lived with memories of his boyhood companions—their bright faces and happy laughter. He had cherished the hope of seeing them all again, not realizing the changes of time.

A few weeks later a neighbor, not having seen him for awhile, entered his prairie shack. There he found the remains of this lonely man who had been sustained for so many years by visions of the past and hopes for the future.



There is a family living near Maple Creek well known in the whole district by the name of Parsonage. They have made a great contribution to the country and have many interesting tales to tell of the days when the West was young.

A friend of theirs named McPherson and four other teamsters were captured by the Sioux Indians and taken into the hostile camp. This fierce Indian tribe was on the warpath at the time, fighting the American cavalry.

One by one these teamsters were put to death by torture. McPherson was the last and he put up a strong argument to the effect that he was not an American but a Hudson Bay man. At length he was released and told if he was a Hudson

Bay man he could go back to the Hudson Bay. He was turned loose stark naked, told to run north and that if he turned to look back he would be shot. For thirty days he worked his way northward, naked, alone, and unarmed.

He saved himself from sun scald by picking up old pieces of buffalo hide and made rough moccasins from the same material. He came to a deserted Indian camp and gathered enough horsetail hair to snare gophers which he ate raw. He found some small berries. There was water in the sloughs and streams. Burned in the sun by day and perishing from cold at night, McPherson finally fell in with some white traders close to the present site of Saskatoon.



The Homesteader

*God gave all men all earth to love,
But since all hearts are small,
Ordained that each one spot should prove
Beloved over all.*

When homesteads first became available there was a great rush by young men to file on them. They then built some sort of a little shack or sod house, did the required work of fencing and breaking up a number of acres of the prairie sod and waited for the three years until they could obtain title.

A homesteader was usually a bachelor. Some really did well. They proved up and sold out for a good price. Others were fortunate enough to locate in a good district and had the happy experience of seeing neighbors come in and later found themselves with a good farm in a well settled community.

Many, however, lived in remote areas long miles from any neighbor. Water was so scarce that gardens would not grow, crops put in by hard labor withered for lack of rain and gave no returns. These men had lonesome lives. Their shacks were small and often not clean. Their food lacked variety and was not a balanced diet. The nights were long and the howling of the prairie wolves disturbed their sleep and induced dismal thoughts of dread, fear and loneliness. Sometimes the homesteaders were not well and their minds ran along unhealthy lines. Often there was a real departure from the normal way of thinking and acting so that delusions existed. Some of them, not having normal food and rest, developed what was called "homestead insanity" and had to be taken by the Mounted Police and sent to mental hospitals for treatment.

Most of them, however, kept their heads and maintained their sense of humor. They would travel on foot long distances for companionship and make light of their troubles. One man had his toes frozen in the early winter. He treated the frost-bites as well as he could and by spring only one toe was black and painful. He was thoroughly fed up. He elevated the foot on the end of his bunk and shot the toe off with his trusty rifle.

In the years 1908 to 1913 the rural districts were settled rapidly. Many people who were looking for new homes shipped their effects along the Crow line to Seven Persons and then proceeded to their new homes with horses and wagons. The good crops in 1915-16 gave great hopes, but the long series of poor crops later brought many hardships and much poverty.

Wilfred Eggleston in his book, "High Prairie," gives a vivid picture of life in this part of the country.

Parts of the country were settled by the homestead system copied from the United States settlement plan. The 4th Meridian runs north and south about 30 miles east of Medicine Hat and the principal meridian is close to Winnipeg. The range lines run six miles apart, parallel to these meridians of longitude. The base is the international boundary line between Canada and the United States, that is, the 49th parallel of north latitude.

As these lines cross each other the whole country is blocked off into squares 6 miles by 6 miles called townships. Thus each township contains 36 square miles each being called a section. A quarter of a section, that is 160 acres, was a homestead lot. For a time an adjoining quarter could be obtained as a pre-emption. During the years of the rush for this land, men and women could be seen standing in long queues for days and nights in front of the Medicine Hat Lands Title office, holding a place when an area was being made available for entry. It was a case of first come first served and competition was keen.

Two sections, that is 1,280 acres in each township, were reserved for school lands. A part also represented the railway grant and the Hudson Bay lands.

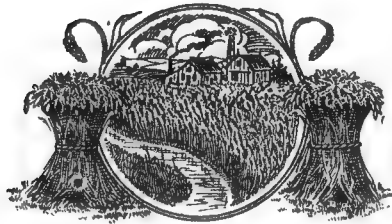
This system has worked fairly well in level areas used for grain growing. In a country of hills and vales like the Peace River country it seems out of place. Its application shuts out all the neighborliness of the old river lots where the homes were close together on the then highway of commerce. It has made necessary a new type of prairie life where homes must be far apart and where the distance to markets, schools and churches was very great.

The pioneer families in the prairie regions have a lonely life far away from friendly neighbors. This way of life may be changed in the future. In Saskatchewan there are now six incorporated co-operative farms. A number of farmers pool

their resources, work together, use common machinery and in some cases move their buildings and homes to a central farm. There are many advantages to this community living and if there is harmony and good management there will be a brighter future for the producers and their families. There are districts around Medicine Hat where such a system might work if a satisfactory working agreement could be maintained.

Saskatchewan's original farm co-op was formed in 1943 by seven farmers in the Roundhill district. The group now has one modern line of machinery working their combined 1,200 acres where before it was worked by seven small units. At Mount Hope fourteen farmers are organized and at Orley thirty farmers pooled their capital to buy bush clearing machinery which no one of them could afford. There are several other schemes being organized.

A board of directors is appointed from among the members and a president, manager and secretary are also selected. The plan involves careful bookkeeping, checking by government auditors and clearly stated policies as to the distribution of the money.



Natural Gas

*Now this is the law of the jungle
As old and as true as the sky,
And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper,
But the wolf that shall break it must die.
As the creeper that girdles the tree trunk
The law runneth forward and back,
For the strength of the pack is the wolf
And the strength of the wolf is the pack.*
—R. KIPLING.

Rudyard Kipling visited Medicine Hat in the early years of the century. He was taken for a ride around the town in the first automobile that had reached the district. He was somewhat alarmed for his own safety as the machine rattled and coughed a lot. He was much impressed by the beautiful climate and the warm welcome that he received on all sides. He was interested in the natural gas and remarked that Medicine Hat had "all Hell for a basement." The idea came from the awful roar of a gas well being "blown off." The deafening blast of the explosion can be heard for a great distance and the flames leap up higher than the tallest buildings, lighting up the whole area. Visitors and even residents have been terrified by this unearthly sound and flare-up of flame. The "blowing off" of a gas well was for many years a popular and impressive way of entertaining visitors. Some years later there was a suggestion that the name Medicine Hat be changed. Kipling heard of the proposal and wrote strongly opposing any change. He pointed out that the unusual name Medicine Hat really stood for something. The origin of it, which we have given above, recalls in a measure the superstition and the mode of life of a people who roamed the plains for so many centuries.

The city is situated on the South Saskatchewan River. The altitude is 2,181 feet. In 1882 a few white men came in covered wagons to form a tent town. In 1883 the C.P.R. construction gangs came and in June of that year the first train pulled in to Medicine Hat.

C.P.R. engineers discovered natural gas about 40 miles northwest of Medicine Hat. The town then decided to bore a well, but money was scarce. After a time a contract was let and the contractor bored until the money was all used up. Feeling was running high and some felt that the money was being wasted. It is said that the contractor visited the Mayor late at night so no one would know what was being planned. The Mayor, apparently, took the responsibility of telling him to go on drilling. The very next day the Mayor was seen running down the path with no coat, no hat, and braces dangling along behind his heels. Others were sprinting ahead of him and the people thought surely it was a thief chase. The driller had struck gas at 1,010 feet, and as the drill went through the last crust the gas came out with a terrific roar.

The gas is almost pure methane. Many have wondered if it could be used as a motor fuel and the National Research Council at Ottawa has conducted exhaustive experiments. The amount of propane and butane in the gas is extremely small. A recent report of the Research Council reads as follows: "With reference to methane, since the gas cannot be liquified at ordinary temperatures, it would have to be stored at high pressure. This would entail a large and very heavy container for a very small amount of fuel and is, therefore, impracticable. Liquid methane in large thermos flasks has been used in aeroplanes. It is, however, useless for automobiles since the rate of fuel consumption is as great when the car is parked as when running and all the fuel would evaporate overnight.

The pressure has kept up all these years. Some wells have been abandoned, but new wells spaced over a wider area have maintained the supply.

The gas has attracted many industries and has been a great asset to the city. Householders, accustomed to the gas for heating, miss it greatly when they go to other places where there is no gas available. A thermostat can be attached to the furnace and the house will remain at the same temperature all winter without further attention of any kind.

The gas itself is not poisonous, but the fumes must be allowed to escape. There have been a few people asphyxiated during the last 30 years, when no outlet at all was provided for the fumes. It will not do to light a match in a room where

gas is escaping if there is a right mixture of gas and air, but the danger when the gas is carefully handled is nil. Even when not handled properly, it is not greater than with other fuel.

The following true story illustrates the action of gas. A happy soul was staggering home one night, having imbibed not wisely but too well. He had an unopened bottle with him and not wishing to have his wife catch sight of it, he stopped at a small deserted house on the side of the hill to hide his precious treasure. In the morning he felt the need of a pick-up and went to the vacant house to search. He lifted the trap door leading to the cellar and groped around with his hand for the bottle. Not locating it he lit a match. Gas had been escaping from an open gas pipe and the flame from the match started a violent explosion which blew the roof off. The walls fell inward. Our friend was unhurt, but exposed to the gaze of the passers-by.



The Rain-maker

There have been many crop failures in the Medicine Hat district. Year after year the seed goes into the fertile ground in good condition. There is rapid growth and hopes are high for a profitable crop, but alas there have only been five or six really good crops in the last 30 years. There is not enough rain and in early June the hot winds and lack of moisture cause the crops to wither and dry up. This brings blighted hopes and despair to the whole community. In 1921 the farmers decided to do something about it. They had heard of the apparent success of Mr. Hatfield as a rain-maker in the United States.

Collectors went around collecting \$1.00 or more from everyone who would contribute. A man was sent to induce Mr. Hatfield to come to Medicine Hat. He came with his brother and some equipment. The day of his arrival was a big day in Medicine Hat. People came from far and near and the big banquet hall in the Corona hotel was crowded at the luncheon tendered to him. The chair was well filled by Mr. Ratcliffe, who weighed about 360 pounds. The gathering was a very pleasant affair with much good-natured banter, much joviality and many humorous speeches. The guest of honor was given a great welcome, he was promised the riches of the kingdom and the princess for his wife if he could make good. Lawyers promised to defend him for nothing in all the courts of the land if he was sued for bringing too much rain.

He was given a great ovation when he rose to reply. He was very confident. He said he would bring rain and bring it in abundance. He said he had done it before and that he could do it again. He disagreed entirely with the meteorological people in Washington. He was given a lot of applause and encouragement. After the luncheon his two wagonloads of equipment were taken out some 20 miles to Chappice Lake. On the highest hill near the water the tower was erected. Several large trays were elevated on the structure and wires were dropped from these trays to the earth. There were supposed to be some wonderful chemicals in these tray from which fumes would go up and condense the moisture in the clouds and cause rain to fall over an area 100 miles in diameter. No one was

ever permitted to see this magic fluid. If fumes were to rise up to the clouds the liquid would need to be replenished constantly, but nothing like this was ever done.

A lot of rain did come and the trusting ones were jubilant. They were convinced that he could cause rain to fall and cause it to cease falling. He received telegrams asking him to slow up. One telegram read, "Rain enough. Stop for a few days."

Some advised him to take a holiday for a week because the land was soaked. One farmer went out and requested him to bring a light shower every three days and he would prefer to have the shower during the night.

Later, on June 25th, action was demanded because the dry winds came as usual. Mr. Hatfield promised rain within a week, but it failed to come. He said the clouds flew too high for his charm to reach them. One jester came to his rescue with the suggestion that these particular clouds were all empties anyway. He received about \$4,000 and made an agreement to come back the next year. He packed up the equipment, departed for parts unknown, and was never heard of again.

He really was entitled to \$8,000, because there was 4.24 inches of rain, but he reduced the amount to \$5,500 because all parts had not been equally blessed. The contract for the next year promised him \$4,000 an inch for each inch of rain between the 3-inch level and the 6-inch level. He did not return.



The Neigel Case

In 1920 a murder trial of more than usual interest was held in Medicine Hat. It was a sad human tragedy and day after day for the full 18 days of the trial the court room was crowded by those anxious to hear all the sordid details. The evidence showed that fundamental moral principles were either not known or were disregarded by the people involved.

In a district close to Medicine Hat two families lived on farms close together. They had been good neighbors for years and then affections became somewhat crossed and finally a murder pact was made. I do not wish to give the name of one family as they are still in the district and have lived at peace since that time.

According to the evidence, Adam Neigel, made an agreement with the wife of his neighbor that he would do away with his wife and that this neighbor's wife would do away with her husband. Then they two would be married and have the two farms. The story, as it was unfolded to the public, was that Adam came home from town one afternoon and producing a bottle asked his wife to have a drink. She took the drink and almost at once fell unconscious on the bed and went into terribly violent convulsions. She never regained consciousness, but died as the spasms followed each other in quick succession.

Suspicion was aroused and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police made a very careful investigation of all the circumstances surrounding the sad death of this innocent wife and mother. The woman on the farm nearby apparently made no effort to carry out her part of the pact, but surely her conscience cannot be clear and must, through all the years that have passed since then, have given her many unhappy moments. She and her husband moved to another part of the country, but memories must have followed to haunt her if the evidence indicated the real course of events.

Mrs. Neigel, as you will have surmised, died of strychnine poisoning and the medical evidence was of special interest. Doctors gave evidence as to the symptoms of strychnine poisoning and were questioned at great length. The body of the unfortunate woman was exhumed and the stomach contents exam-

ined. Much care had been taken to describe to the jury the symptoms preceding death and before the eyes of the jury small portions of the stomach contents were injected into frogs. The frogs, when the fatal fluid was injected, went into rigid convulsions and died. This was dramatic and convincing proof to the jury that strychnine was in the stomach contents and that it had been the cause of Mrs. Neigel's death.

The accused man, under oath, declared his innocence, but the jury was convinced of his guilt and the judge in a solemn and impressive manner pronounced the fatal words. A few months later a sad procession might have been seen going from the death cell to the scaffold where the debt was paid and a young soul departed into the Great Beyond.



The People

*Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies
And we climb to its summit round by round.*

—J. G. HOLLAND.

There are about 12,000 people in Medicine Hat and there are not more than half a dozen French families. Quite a number have come from the little provinces down by the sea, some directly from the British Isles and a few families from the United States. The great majority of the people were either born in the West or came in from Ontario.

The only new Canadians in any appreciable numbers are the Russian Germans. Their forefathers left Germany in the second half of the 18th century and settled in Russia. They were welcomed there by Catherine the Great who was anxious to have them there to colonize the vacant land. As a people mingling only among themselves, they lived there for 150 years and then came to Alberta, either directly or through the United States. The older people retire early in life and many who have farmed in the surrounding districts now live in Medicine Hat.

THE WAR PERIODS

During the First Great War the people of Medicine Hat showed their patriotism by contributing generously their time and money to every war activity. A battalion was raised in the city with Lt.-Col. Nelson Spencer as the officer commanding. It was later broken up to strengthen other units, but all were proud of the record of these citizen soldiers.

Between the wars a nucleus of an organization was kept up by the officers of the South Alberta Regiment. These officers deserve great credit as they gave freely of their own time and money to keep the unit alive.

When the conflict was renewed in 1939 the young men and young women again took up the great obligation and flocked to the colors. Some went for the excitement and ad-

venture, but many went because of a high sense of duty to the country of their birth. Some came back broken in body and some were never seen again by their loved ones. Their names are all enrolled in the book of remembrance and as long as memory lasts and records are read, their deeds of courage will stand out to their credit and honor.

In the Second Great War, Medicine Hat was fortunate in having war industries located close to the city.

No. 34 Service Flying Training Service School brought to the city a great number of young flying men from every part of the Empire and from countries of Europe. The grimness and horror of war are shown in that of the first classes trained there hardly one of those bright young men have survived. Nearly all of them came flaming down in night attacks over Germany.

The prisoner-of-war camp on Dunmore Hill contained as many as 12,000 prisoners at times. Many of these young Germans worked out on farms and helped greatly during the labour shortage. They also grew great quantities of vegetables on gardens which they themselves irrigated.

The Alberta Foundry had about the only contract for making shells that was given west of the Great Lakes. This gave employment to many who otherwise would have been out of work.

The Experimental Station at Suffield is the only one of its kind in the Empire. It is situated on the British Block which has an area of about 900 square miles.



CONCLUSION

The purpose of these notes is to place on record some events that will give a picture of the way of life, the living conditions, the dangers and struggles of those who have played their part and passed on. No attempt has been made to delve into family histories or to single out recent individual accomplishments. The records of the schools, the churches, the railway, the General Hospital and the city administration contain the achievements of those who have contributed much to the common welfare.

The pages of this volume contain material that was not readily available. It was gathered from many books, some of which have long since gone out of print. These records have been gathered and put into print as a recognition of the great debt of gratitude we of the present generation owe to those who endured the hardships of the pioneering age and gave such evidence of courage and fortitude. Much remains to be done, but these old-timers made a contribution as they passed along and set a standard that will not easily be surpassed.

Night follows night, years come and go,
Creeds pass with meteor flame;
But high, serene, the stars still glow—
Man's heart is e'er the same.

—James A. Tucker.

